

Today I voted to pass the American Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Currently, America is in the midst of facing the worst economic crisis since The Great Depression. 3.6 million American jobs have been lost since this recession began and more Americans face losing their homes, their businesses, their jobs, their health care and their savings.

Oregonians are not immune to the deepening economic crisis facing our nation. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will provide much needed relief to American families and a much needed immediate boost to our economy. Most importantly, it will provide tax relief to 95% of Oregonian households with every paycheck - the most direct ways to ensure that the Oregonians who need help the most get the benefit.

Thousands of Oregonians have been added to the ranks of the uninsured, having lost their health insurance because of circumstances at work or because they simply could no longer afford the monthly premium. This bill will make it possible for tens of thousands of Oregonians to keep their health insurance by providing Oregonians direct assistance after the loss of a job, to make insurance payments, protect their families, and better prepare for the future.

In addition to creating an estimated 44,000 jobs across Oregon, this bill will give direct aid to our states, along with the hundreds of millions of dollars for improving and maintaining transportation, roads and bridges, healthcare, and education.

This recovery act will help in ways that Oregonians and our state need it the most. While this bill won't entirely solve the gaping budget hole in Salem, it certainly makes the task of our legislators a little easier and comes at it at a time in their planning process that will allow them to best prepare to navigate the road that lies ahead.

The assistance to education provided in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will make it easier for college students to pay for their education through tax relief and increased Pell grants. Money for state stabilization will help Oregon's schools to retain staff and stay open. Money for school modernization and billions of dollars in research will find its way to Oregon campuses.

Our state is known for the progress that we have made developing a new energy future, this bill will provide direct help which will increase certainty and stability for Oregon's emerging renewable energy companies -- thereby creating jobs, helping Oregonians to save money and helping to preserve our planet.

A Vote to Get Oregon Back on its Feet

February 13, 2009

I'm pleased that by working with President Obama and the leadership in Congress, we have been able to deliver a significant package of benefits that will pay dividends immediately for Oregonians.